

## 1. Executive Summary

In March 2000, UNICEF Pakistan, in consultation with the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia, decided to undertake an in-depth evaluation of advocacy and social mobilization, one of three "fundamental strategies" of the GOP-UNICEF Country Programme of Cooperation (CP). The evaluation covers the period from January 1999 to June 2001, roughly the first half of the 1999-2003 CP. The purpose of the evaluation is "to help UNICEF and its partners learn from the past in order to plan and implement effective advocacy and social mobilization initiatives over the second half of the CP and beyond" (UNICEF 2001b, p. 1). The key evaluation questions appear in Appendix A. The evaluation followed a utilization-focused approach, as described in Section 2.3.

This report draws on two major studies that UNICEF commissioned for the evaluation<sup>1</sup>, as well as several other assessments which provide useful data on advocacy and social mobilization in relation to specific projects and programmes. The author has synthesized data from these studies and many other sources in preparing this report.

### Key Findings and Recommendations

1. *The evaluation has identified areas where advocacy and social mobilization have contributed to the achievement of project and programme objectives, but attribution difficulties and inadequate monitoring data make it impossible to determine the extent to which advocacy and social mobilization have affected macro-level trends and indicators.*

The case studies of the Girl Child Project and the UPE Sialkot Project (Appendix D and E) provide the clearest evidence of highly successful advocacy and social mobilization initiatives under the current CP. These major projects have been well planned and effectively implemented, largely with the assistance of NGO partners. Both serve as models and have clearly made significant contributions toward the achievement of the broad objectives in the current Master Plan of Operations (MPO). Furthermore, they provide UNICEF and its CP partners with a rich body of knowledge and experience with which to chart new programmes and projects in the future. Some evidence suggests that the GOP's increased attention to children and women and its emphasis on the girl child are a direct result of UNICEF's persistent advocacy work.

The results of advocacy and social mobilization in other areas of the CP are mixed. Most other successful examples of advocacy and social mobilization have been small-scale, well-planned initiatives that have included clear outcomes and monitoring procedures.

2. *Advocacy and social mobilization play a major, indispensable role in the CP. They take place at many different levels, within and outside of programmes, and with the involvement of many partners. Most advocacy and social mobilization initiatives under the CP are long-term and evolve over time.*

Advocacy and social mobilization are integral to all sector programmes within the current CP, and go hand-in-hand with programme communication. There are important non-programmatic applications of advocacy and social mobilization in support of the rights of children and women. This report refers to such applications as general advocacy and social mobilization. General

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<sup>1</sup> They are: *Documentation of UNICEF's Advocacy and Social Mobilization Strategies and Survey of Stakeholders* (Raasta 2002) and *Evaluation and Documentation of Universal Primary Education Project Sialkot* (Organization and Management Development Center, 2002).

advocacy and social mobilization are led by the UNICEF Representative, other senior staff and the Chiefs of Programmes in UNICEF's provincial offices. Staff carry out much of this important work informally in their daily interactions.

3. *General advocacy and social mobilization wherein UNICEF staff promote respect for the rights of children and women is regarded as a key staff function. However, UNICEF has not given this function the attention that it deserves, considering that this is perhaps the most important way UNICEF communicates its core values.*

The roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to general advocacy and social mobilization are inadequately reflected in job descriptions and in personnel policies. This type of advocacy and social mobilization is generally not well planned and monitored. It is important that all staff members have an orientation to general advocacy and social mobilization. Some need training and communication support materials to perform this function well. Above all, staff need to be clear on what these terms mean and how they are to apply them.

**Recommendation:** UNICEF Pakistan should take steps to ensure that its personnel policies, planning and monitoring and evaluation systems better reflect the roles of staff members in relation to general advocacy and social mobilization, and that staff receive orientation, training and communication support materials where needed.

UNICEF and its partners need to do more to document non-programmatic and high-level programme advocacy and social mobilization. Missing are the details of tactics, methods and nuances in this often highly sensitive work. Institutional memory is lost without documentation, and this impedes learning over time.

**Recommendation:** UNICEF and its partners should document non-programmatic and high-level programme advocacy and social mobilization more systematically in order to track progress and capture important lessons.

4. *The CP partners apply advocacy and social mobilization according to three distinct models:*
  - a. *Under the **direct model** they advocate and mobilize individuals and groups directly on behalf of children and women.*
  - b. *Under the **intermediary model** they do the same through intermediaries.*
  - c. *Under the **rights-holder model** they empower children and women to advocate and mobilize on their own behalf in order to claim their rights from duty bearers.*

The rights-holder model fits best with a rights-based approach to programming. The Girl Child Project is a highly successful example of this approach. While all three approaches are needed during the remainder of the CP, the CP partners must increasingly make the rights-holder model their priority.

5. *Conventional definitions of advocacy and social mobilization, as understood by leading practitioners and theorists, are broad and complex. Since no two conventional definitions are the same and the definitions change over time, it follows that there is no overall, coherent concept of advocacy and social mobilization in the minds of the CP team and key stakeholders.*

Some UNICEF staff and many staff members among their partners are unclear about the meaning of advocacy and social mobilization. Lack of precision and inconsistency in the use of these

terms, particularly in planning documents, has contributed to this misunderstanding. Not all of UNICEF's programme staff link advocacy and social mobilization with the rights of children and women.

Most conventional definitions of advocacy and social mobilization inadequately reflect UNICEF's rights-based approach to programming. Advocacy, social mobilization and programme communication are applied much differently within a rights-based framework than in conventional approaches to communication. Rights-based advocacy and social mobilization strive to enable rights-holders to take greater control over their life situations while conventional approaches are often prescriptive and message-driven.

UNICEF and its partners increasingly, yet inconsistently, undertake advocacy and social mobilization within a rights-based framework. It is essential that UNICEF and its partners come to terms with this important issue since consistency is critical when an organization adopts a rights-based approach to programming.

**Recommendations:** The GOP and UNICEF should define advocacy and social mobilization and associated programme communication within a rights-based framework, and explain these terms clearly when they use them. The GOP and UNICEF should increasingly apply a rights-based approach in all advocacy, social mobilization and associated programme communication.

*6. The scope of advocacy and social mobilization under the CP is vast. The evaluation shows the need for more intensive advocacy and social mobilization in priority areas, such as the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI), where progress toward the goals of the CP are lagging.*

UNICEF and its partners may be trying to do too much and at too many levels, given that they are actively involved in some 40 programmes and issues where advocacy and social mobilization play a role.

**Recommendation:** The GOP and UNICEF should review the CP's advocacy and social mobilization initiatives with a view to a more sharply focused set of priorities over the next few years within the Medium-term Strategic Plan.

*7. The GOP's institutional capacity for advocacy and social mobilization is not as strong as UNICEF's. UNICEF's capacity is largely centralized in Islamabad at a time when increased support for social programmes is needed at provincial and district levels.*

Institutional capacity needs to be examined broadly, and in the context of the GOP's devolution process.

**Recommendation:** The GOP, UNICEF and their CP partners should commission a study on the future of communication support to Pakistan's social sectors with a view to developing sustainable institutional arrangements to support the GOP, where support is needed most over the long term.

UNICEF's provincial offices and their partners have expressed the need for more training in advocacy and social mobilization. The GOP's devolution process makes it imperative for UNICEF to do more to build the capacity of its provincial offices and their partners working at the district level and lower.

**Recommendation:** UNICEF should strengthen the capacity of its provincial offices and their programme partners in relation to advocacy, social mobilization and associated programme communication, and UNICEF should make the organizational changes necessary to sustain this capacity.

*8. The evaluation finds that beneficiary participation enhances the effectiveness of communication. The CP's advocacy and social mobilization initiatives under the rights-holder model feature high levels of beneficiary participation, but the GOP and UNICEF need to do more to increase the participation of beneficiaries in planning, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy and social mobilization.*

UNICEF could do more by example to encourage the GOP and other partners to adopt collaborative and participatory approaches to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy and social mobilization. The GOP-UNICEF Medium Term Review (MTR) clearly demonstrated the value of engaging district-level partners and beneficiaries, especially children, in a major review.

**Recommendation:** The GOP and UNICEF should give greater priority to collaborative and participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy, social mobilization and associated programme communication initiatives.

*9. UNICEF and its CP partners have lost opportunities to learn from their advocacy and social mobilization initiatives owing to a weak monitoring system.*

The present monitoring system places too much emphasis on activities and too little on results. Neither programmatic nor general advocacy and social mobilization are adequately tracked and indicators are inconsistently gender- and rights-sensitive. Section 3.4.2 deals with these findings in detail.

**Recommendation:** The GOP and UNICEF should adopt a results-based management (RBM) system of performance measurement that is consistent with a rights-based approach to programming, and that reflects programme-wide priorities such as gender equality.

#### Findings and Recommendations of Three Case Studies

*10. In-depth analysis of three programme initiatives has found encouraging results, with room for improvement.*

#### Polio Eradication and Vitamin A Supplementation

The National Immunization Days (NID) campaigns have the basic ingredients for successful communication, but the programme has not achieved its coverage targets. The programme design for polio eradication with its door-to-door approach to service delivery has undermined community mobilization and diverted attention away from routine immunization. A recent GOP and donor-supported review made several practical suggestions for improving the effectiveness of communication in relation to the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) and polio eradication.

**Recommendations:** The GOP, UNICEF and their partners should re-examine their EPI and NID strategies and redouble their communication efforts aimed at increasing routine immunization coverage. The GOP, UNICEF and their partners should follow up on the suggestions contained in the report of the PEI/EPI Communication Review. They should monitor the changes and adopt the innovations that prove successful.

UNICEF's intensive, low key advocacy initiative resulted in the GOP agreeing to include vitamin A supplementation in its polio eradication campaign. The NID rounds in 1999 reached 90-100% of all children under 5 years of age (UNICEF 2002, p. 9).

#### The Girl Child Project

The Girl Child Project is a cost-efficient, shining example of a successful rights-based approach to advocacy and social mobilization. It is helping to transform thousands of adolescent girls, who in turn are claiming their rights within their families and their communities, without major conflict.

**Recommendation:** UNICEF and its partners should continue to support the Girl Child Project and explore ways of utilizing the same or similar models where feasible in more districts of Pakistan, with linkages to local government and micro-credit and marketing initiatives.

#### UPE Sialkot Project

The UPE Sialkot Project demonstrates the power of advocacy, social mobilization and associated programme communication in bringing about social change. It has achieved 97% enrolment of children aged 5-9 and a 99.3% student retention rate, owing in large part to the mobilization of parents at the village level (Organization and Management Development Center 2002, p. 40-41). This initiative has cost less than US\$ 2.00 per household over a three-year period. While the project serves as a successful model, it cannot be replicated without adjustments. It warrants UNICEF's continued support in order to maintain its achievements and make further improvements to the quality of education.

**Recommendation:** Stakeholders should follow up on the recommendations contained in the evaluation of the UPE Sialkot Project and strive to improve the quality of primary education and to institutionalize UPE on a wider scale.